

OVERTURE PROTEST ALSO IS ASSAILED

If First Is Unconstitutional, the
Other Must Be, Dr. Mac-

24/3/17 Lennan Says

COMMISSION MUST DECIDE

If the overture which passed the Philadelphia Presbytery meeting at the March session is to be called "unconstitutional" by a minority of the Presbytery, the complaint signed by the minority to protest the overture is also "unconstitutional," the Rev. Dr. A. Gordon MacLennan, author of the overture, said last night in his sermon in the Bethany Presbyterian Church, Twenty-second and Bainbridge streets.

The overture, which was adopted by the Presbytery, petitioned the General Assembly, which will meet at Grand Rapids, Mich., in May to require all church boards, the theological seminaries and the council to resubscribe to the doctrinal deliverances of the General Assembly. The result would be to weed out liberals who are holding official positions in the Church.

But the complaint of the minority of the Presbytery which declared the overture "unconstitutional" itself is "unconstitutional," Dr. MacLennan pointed out.

"There is much questioning going through the Church," said Dr. MacLennan. "The receipts are away below what they have been. The decrease is attributed to the fact that many persons have questioned the loyalty of some members of the boards."

Not a Criticism Primarily

"The purpose of my overture was not primarily a criticism of the boards, but a desire to re-establish the confidence of the Church in the boards."

"It is wise that such an action should be taken now rather than later, when it would become a personal matter dealing with the individuals. If the General Assembly takes such an action now the matter will be left for the men to judge whether they are qualified to have a place on the boards."

The complaint that has been signed is entirely unconstitutional and will of

very necessity be thrown out by the Judicial Commission of the General Assembly.

“The attempt by the liberals or any one else to prevent the sending of an overture to the Assembly is very new and absurd. It first denies the inalienable right of petition. The spirit of democracy in America and in the Presbyterian Church has always safeguarded the right of being heard on all moral and religious subjects when these views are presented in a regular manner.

“In the second place, there is no law in our books preventing such a procedure. The very idea of forcing individuals or bodies not to overture in petition is absurd.

Calls Complaint Unlawful

“Again, the complaint is unlawful because of the principle involved in it, namely, that of the will of the minority. This recourse was a protest, not a complaint.

“Furthermore, the rule of obtaining accredited signatures of those recorded present does not apply except in cases of nonjudicial or administrative matters. But this is not a case of any sort, only an action of a Presbytery in exercising its full rights of petition.

“Finally, the ground assigned for the complaint — ‘unconstitutional’ — is assailing the subject matter of the overture, which is not a reason or a ground. This matter is not to be determined by the minority of the Presbytery itself, but rather by the Judicial Commission of the Assembly.

Rev. Alexander MacColl

SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
21ST AND WALNUT STREETS
PHILADELPHIA

19
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Dear Dr Brown,

I enclose a report of the latest "sermon" by Brother MacLennan of Bethany. It seems to me a shame that such gross perversion of the truth should go uncontradicted. I am right, am I not? , in thinking that there has been a substantial increase in the Board's receipts. Unfortunately a statement of this sort, appearing in the Public Ledger, is believed by many good people. I have been so constantly correcting reports in the Ledger that I donot want to do so again. Would not a statement from yourself , or some other officer of the Board, to the Ledger be worth while?

Cordially,

Alexander MacColl